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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

25 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Earle G. Wheeler
Chairman
The Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT : Agency Assistance on a Special Project

1. Upon receipt of your 19 June note (CM 5310-70), I asked my Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs, Mr. Carver, to handle your request and ensure that we provided your associates with all possible Agency support.

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2. I have learned that officers of our [redacted] [redacted] have already been working for some time in close cooperation with members of General Blackburn's office and that we have already provided SACSA with all information currently available on the Son Tay complex. An Agency group headed by Mr. Carver's deputy, [redacted] is attending a special SACSA meeting on 25 June to provide additional data on (a) probable North Vietnamese reactions to the contemplated operation should it be executed, (b) our psychological staff's assessment of the probable impact of the operation on the morale of other POWs, not at Son Tay, and (c) strips in Laos that could be used for refuelling the helicopter carrying the troops to be inserted into the compound itself. On this last point, our briefer will of course note that the situation in North Laos may change between now and late September. Hence, if the operation remains under active consideration, further readings will have to be taken as the scheduled launch time approaches.

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3. While we will obviously not be in a position to make any policy recommendations on whether or not the contemplated operation should be undertaken, please be assured that we will do our best to provide your associates with all pertinent data available to or obtainable by this Agency and any other support it is within our capacity to provide.

Richard Helms
Director

DCI/SAVA:GACarver:taw:25June1970

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

2 July 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brig. General Donald D. Blackburn
JCS/SACSA

SUBJECT : Intelligence Support to Special Project

1. I have in hand Col. Frisbie's acknowledgement of receipt of our 1 July 1970 memorandum, an acknowledgement in which Col. Frisbie requests a further CIA input on two additional questions:

a. What are the political, national and international humanitarian and military considerations that must be weighed in a decision to execute a recovery operation?

b. Is the probability of getting an unknown number of our men out of NVN worth the risk that must be expended?

2. Per our 2 July telephone conversation, both of these questions raise matters well outside of this Agency's competence or jurisdiction. We cannot cast a knowledgeable vote on any net risk-benefit judgment on a proposed military operation, nor can we essay a formal opinion of the political equities or domestic consequences of a U.S. action. It will therefore not be possible for us to join in the preparation of a coordinated CIA/DIA response to Col. Frisbie's questions. We will of course do everything we can to service your requests for analysis of probable North Vietnamese reactions or responses to various hypothetical contingencies and to make available any physical support (e.g., Laotian landing strips) you might need that we can provide.

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George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

GAO
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Orig. - Addressee

I - GAO Chrono I - VAS/RAC (Son Tay file)

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